

# Re:Port

Vol. 3, Issue 2

The Independent Newsletter for Portfolio Users

Aug/Sep, 1994

## Ports on the highway

### Internet has files, areas for users

The Portfolio is your travel companion on the road, and now also on the Information Superhighway.

Also known as the Infobahn for our many German subscribers, the "super-highway" is basically the Internet — a very large network of computers connected originally for military research purposes.

Then, universities began to come online, and now, millions of end users add themselves to the Internet every month.

Although that's a far oversimplified history of the Internet, our purpose here is to point out the Information Rest Stops that relate to the Port.

We'll present the information that we have found, and then give you some tips on how to find more yourself. One thing about the Internet is that searching at one time may bring up nothing or very little, and at another time from another computer may bring up thousands of files. You just never know.

This article assumes that you have access to the Internet. If you do not, consider getting it. You will need a modem and most likely a desktop computer (although you can use the Port; see "Beginner's Column" on page 7). If you

are a student at a university, most likely you can go to the computer center and get an online account for free. If not, you should call the local university and ask if there are dial-up accounts available for outsiders.

If you are in a major city, you will certainly have a commercial Internet provider available locally to you. If not, you will need to dial long-distance to get to one. Most providers charge a flat rate per month for unlimited dial-up access, or a small hourly charge. Most likely, you will save money with the flat rate.

Re:Port uses Netcom, a large Internet provider in the United States. Call 1-800-501-8649 for more information. Look in the back of computer magazines or in your local paper, and you're sure to see ads for many other Internet providers.

OK, let's assume you've gone online and are ready to search for information on the Port.

The first thing you'll probably want to do is look for files. Fortunately, there are a few places on the Internet with good collections.

The best repository is at the University of Michigan. Once online, you can connect with them using FTP (file transfer protocol, a program avail-

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Inside



# From the Editor

## Sorry it's late; can we get Port out of limbo?

First, let me apologize for the extreme lateness of this issue of Re:Port.

I appreciate the patience of all of our subscribers.

The lateness is a combination of the difficulty in finding new and interesting Portfolio information to pass on and the pressures of yet another change in jobs.

Now, I am working for Wiporwil Systems, Inc., which is the former parent company of my old employer, Inventory Xpress.

For the first time since the inception of Re:Port, programming the Portfolio is no longer my full-time job.

Instead, the focus is on Microsoft Windows, using a new programming language (for me) called Visual C++.

In future issues of Re:Port, I hope to apply this new knowledge to the Portfolio, perhaps with some more Windows-based Port programs, as well as Portfolio applications that are written in C or C++ instead of Pascal.

Do not worry. Re:Port keeps records of what the first issue you received was, not when you subscribed.

A "one year" subscription means you will receive six issues, regardless of when they are published.

Anyone keeping abreast of the situation with Atari will know why there is a sudden dearth of new Portfolio happenings.

Atari Corporation has issued numerous press releases over the past 12 months that makes it easy to

conclude that the new 64-bit Jaguar game system is their primary focus for development and marketing.

The Portfolio, a product introduced by Atari five years ago, is not a part of the current hardware line that includes the Jaguar, the Lynx, the TT computer and the Atari Falcon 030 computer.

Because of the ongoing demand from several Value-Added-Resellers that have created industry-specific software for the Portfolio, the Port will continue to be made available to those purchasers for an indefinite time.

So, the Port isn't completely dead, but Atari isn't considering it a viable consumer option.

The Jaguar is a great game machine; I just picked up Wolfenstein 3D, a version of the popular PC game for the Jag.

It is incredibly addictive and far more appealing than much of what is available for the Nintendo and Sega platforms.

And perhaps the best consumer video game on the market now is a Jag game, *Tempest 2000*.

Still, Atari has a long, hard road ahead of it if it wishes to ever come close to, let alone topple, the Nintendo and Sega empires.

With its focus on the Jaguar, Atari has also had to ignore to some extent the rest of its PC group.

Therefore, I'd speculate that it is going to be a while before Atari is able to turn its attention back to the Portfolio.

How can we get Atari's attention?

First, be patient and let the Jaguar run its course for a while.

Things may calm down after the Christmas season, so 1995 will be the target for renewed interest in the Portfolio.

After that, the thing to realize is that money gets Atari interested, just like any other company.

Buy a Portfolio for a family member.

If you're in a position to do so, get a Portfolio for each member of the sales staff of your company.

Increased Portfolio sales may wake Atari up.

In the meantime, I've devoted much of this issue to the Internet, a hot topic right now for all computer users.

Check out some of the places we mention and become active in the Portfolio community. Begin discussions and take part in them.

Continue to use your Portfolio and show it to others.

I find that taking the Port out in a public place still garners lots of interest.

And if you are on the Internet, drop me a line about the Port at [davestewart@netcom.com](mailto:davestewart@netcom.com). I would love to hear from you.

Even without much support from Atari, the Portfolio can still be a useful and long-lived product.

If we officially become orphans, there is still a large "extended family" of other Port users, many online, subscribers to this newsletter, or members of local Atari user groups. Seek out another user in your area and keep on Porting.



# Industry News

## Optrol drops its low-end FlashRAM card

Optrol, the makers of large-capacity FlashRAM cards for the Atari Portfolio, have announced that they will no longer offer the 524K version of the card.

The company will still provide the 1-meg, 2-meg, and 4-meg versions of the FlashRAM card, which do not require batteries and are the same size as a normal RAM card.

The 524K version of the card was created to handle a shortage in the other sizes of the chips. Now that the other chips are available, the 1-meg card is actually less expensive than the 524K version.

### German RAM cards available

Here's an interesting alternative to FlashRAM and normal RAM cards from Germany.

About half a year ago some German Portfolio users (Upgrade Guide author Stefan Kaechele in particular) decided to build a low cost RAM card after it had become impossible to get some new "original" cards in Germany.

With Andreas Goebel, a young electronic engineer who had never seen a Portfolio before, the right man to develop the cards was found and was very interested in this new challenge.

According to the Port's hardware specifications, he designed two types of RAM cards.

One card comes with a small lithium battery to maintain data for at least a year when the card is removed from the Portfolio.

This card appears to be the right choice for people who use several cards and tend to change them quite often.

The other card uses a special type of (built-in) capacitor which is powered, or rather re-loaded, by the Portfolio, even if the "low-battery" message has already appeared.

(This message just indicates that there is not enough power left to run the display. The internal RAMs and a memory card are still powered for some time.)

Whenever this card is taken off the Portfolio, data is maintained for at least 48 hours.

This card is ideal for users who do not use other RAM cards and leave it in the Port most of the time.

With both cards you can choose just the capacity of memory storage you actually need. Both cards have been designed to take up either one, two or three 128K chips.

They can be used just like a standard A: drive, but with one important difference: the chips are **not** connected with a logic chip but need to be selected by small dip switches.

In other words, on a 3x128K card you get 384K to store your data, but you can only access one chip at a time.

What appears to be a major drawback at the first sight does make sense when you take a look at the prices of custom RAM cards.

One thing that makes them expensive is all the additional stuff that needs to be on the cards to make them appear to DOS just a like "normal" disk drive.

But the idea was to provide one of the cheapest Portable machines with a real low-cost RAM card, so that at least this feature of a standard card had to be sacrificed.

(Remember the Port's CLIPBOARD to transfer data between the applications and between the different drives....)

Instead of this slight inconveniences the cards react just like the custom cards. They are fast, reliable, don't have to be cleaned by a driver program and, of course, they are of the same size as the "originals".

Each card fits completely into the Portfolio's card slot. On the lower left corner (the one that sticks out of the Port) are the small switches (and on the capacitor card a tiny cabinet to take up the "Gold-Cap").

The cards are priced as follows:

For the capacitor cards, 128K for \$80, 256K for \$95, and 384K for \$115. For the battery cards, 128K for \$90, 256K for \$110, and 384K for \$130.

All cards are manufactured in Germany. Depending on the amount of orders and the availability of the components you should allow 2 to 4 weeks for delivery.

Add \$10 per package for shipping within Europe, customers from all other countries please add \$20 per package.

Send your order to:

**Andreas Goebel**

**Glockengarten 43**

**D-44803 Bochum**

**(phone: ++49-(0)234-355369)**

Please understand that Herr Goebel cannot take POs, CODs, or credit card orders.



# Utility

## Program helps organize your Address Books

This month's utility will help you keep organized when good intentions fail you.

Most of us have intended to create clean, well-organized Address Book files, with separate files each containing only related information.

However, this information is usually entered quickly, which means that it just ends up in one big main Address Book file that just happens to be open at the time.

FILTER takes care of that problem.

To install the program, copy FILTER.EXE from the \FILTER directory of Re:Port Disk #14 to your Portfolio's RAM card or C: drive.

Then, type FILTER to begin the program.

The program will ask for the name of the Address Book file.

Enter the path and name of the file.

You do not need to include .ADR, but it is OK if you do.

Now, enter the name of the new Address Book you would like to create.

Again, you do not need to add the .ADR extension.

Then, enter the data you are searching for.

Only those Address Book en-



ON DISK

FILTER is in the  
\\FILTER subdirec-  
tory on Re:Port  
Disk #14

tries that contain this data will be written into the new .ADR file.

The next two options determine how that data is matched against your old address book.

First, the program asks if this is a case sensitive search.

If so, type Y. If not, type N.

Case sensitive means that the data will match only if it is in the same case as what you typed.

Answering "no" means that you don't care what case the data is, so long as the word is the same.

For numbers, answer "yes" because that makes the search faster.

Finally, the program asks if you want to search in just the titles of the Address Book.

Answer Y if you want to match against the titles, or Answer N if you want to search the titles and the information cards.

The program will then begin the search.

It goes by in two passes.

The first time, it searches the whole Address Book to find the entries that are matches.

The second time, it actually

writes matching cards to the new file.

When it is finished, you may open the new .ADR file in the Address Book application.

Let's take an example of a large .ADR file that has many different long-distance phone numbers in it.

The Address Book is called PHONES.ADR, so we type that in as the Address Book name.

We're going to filter out everyone in the 212 area code, so let's call the new file NEWYORK.ADR.

Then, enter 212 as the data to search for.

In general, the more information you provide for a search, the more specific the resulting data will be. However, you may also miss some data that you intended to bring over.

Now, because this is a number, we'll say yes to case sensitive searching.

And because the phone number is usually on the title line of each card, we'll answer yes to the "just in titles" question.

After those steps are taken, a new Address Book is created that has only the New York phone numbers in it.

A few more passes through the FILTER program would result in a nice set of separated files that are much easier to wade through.

*Buy it,  
Sell it,  
Trade it*

Re:Port's Classified ad section is a great place to contact other Portfolio users when you want to buy a used part, sell an old system, or trade a ROM card or two.

### Affordable Rates

25 words or less .....	\$3.50
26 to 50 words .....	\$5.00
51 to 100 words .....	\$7.00



# Internet

Continued from Page 1

able on most Internet connections) to archive.umich.edu.

Login with the user name "anonymous" and send your email address as your password. This will allow you complete access to all the Portfolio files, along with much else.

To get to the Port files, type "cd /atari/Portfolio". Note that you use forward slashes here, because most machines on the Internet use Unix or some variation, not MS-DOS. However, for FTP, that's about the only difference you'll notice.

Once there, you can type "dir" to get a directory of files. However, at this point, you'll mostly just see a list of subdirectories available.

The subdirectories split the files into general categories. This server has a nice arrangement of categories (some overlapping slightly) available: Applications, archivers, bootstrap (for file transfers between Sun workstations and the Port), demos, games, graphics, languages, sound, support, telecommunications, text, and utilities.

To use a subdirectory, just type "cd <directory name>" and do another "dir" command to see the files.

If you've ever logged on to CompuServe of GENie, you'll probably recognize many of the filenames. For instance, the original advertisement for Re:Port was posted only on CompuServe and GENie, yet at one time it could be found on hundreds of Internet servers. There is basically quite a bit of cross-posting from commercial services. However, you can also find some interesting things that are not available elsewhere, such as the file transfer programs for Sun workstations.

Once you see a file that you like, type "get <filename>" to transfer it to your machine.

Another interesting FTP site is the University of Wisconsin at csd4.csd.uwm.edu. It basically contains some text files about the Portfolio in the /pub/Portables/Portfolio directory. You can also find information about many other portable computers there.

If you are in Switzerland, or you are a bonafide foreign researcher, you can also access ftp.switch.ch, a private server that provides a "mirror" of the Michigan Atari site.

If you aren't an FTP pro, you can also get access to the Michigan files through the "gopher" program, which basically allows you to access FTP and other resources through a menu-driven interface. Do a "veronica" search on Portfolio to find the Michigan server.

The other areas of interest for Portfolio users lie on the Usenet, a sprawling "bulletin board" that handles millions of messages a day in around 8,000 topics.

Two Usenet newsgroups used to have plenty of conversation about the Port, but now are more limited.

However, it is not because they do not allow Port talk, just that no one with a Port is talking. If you have access to these newsgroups, please write a message and begin a conversation. Many Portfolio users are "lurking" — reading messages and waiting for someone else to start talking.

The two newsgroups that fit the Port the best are "comp.sys.handhelds" and "comp.sys.palmtops".

Comp.sys.handhelds had two messages about the Port recently, while Palmtops had none.

Any sort of message is viable in these places; most focus on support and on used equipment sales and trades.

The other possibilities for Port messages on the Usenet are "comp.sys.atari.8bit" and "comp.sys.atari.advocacy".

Use the former to talk about the Port as a computer, and use the latter to discuss opinions about the Port and why it should be the No. 1 handheld in the world!

As you can see, there is information about the Port available on the Infobahn. And the Internet is growing daily, so there could be much more every time you log on.

Re:Port found this information using the following methods:

ARCHIE — a tool for finding files on anonymous FTP sites. We searched for "Portfolio," "Atari," and "PBASIC."

VERONICA — a tool for searching "gopherspace," which is a menu-driven database of Internet resources. We searched for "Portfolio" and "Atari."

LYNX — a program for accessing the World Wide Web. Skimming around in here did not turn up anything that Archie and Veronica didn't find, but the World Wide Web is probably the fastest-growing piece of the Internet right now, so expect anything new to show up here.

TIN — a program for reading Usenet news. Any newsreader will do. Basically, we just looked at the big list of newsgroups and found the ones listed above.



# Entertainment

## This solitaire game will give you a Headache

One of the most popular Re:Port games has been our standard Solitaire.

If that game didn't make you think hard enough, try the new game, which is guaranteed to give you a headache.

So, appropriately, it is called Headache.

Headache is probably unlike most solitaire games you have played before.

You start with all 52 cards dealt face-up on the right-hand side of the screen.

The goal is to stack all of the cards by suit from Ace to King in each of the four Home areas.

To do this requires some planning, and this is where the headaches begin.

You can move a card from each stack to any of the four Pad spaces. You can only have one card in each space, so when they are used, you cannot place another card there until you move one off the Pad back to a stack or onto one of the Home areas.

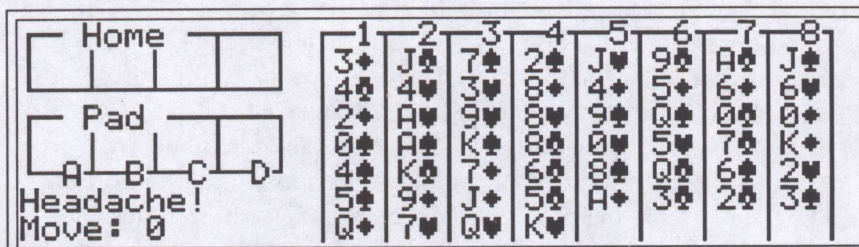
To move a card to another stack, or from the Pad to a stack, it must be the same suit as the card at the bottom of the column and one face value less. For instance, you may place a three of clubs on a column that has a four of clubs on the bottom.

You can move a card to the home position if it is the same suit and one face value greater than a card that is already on a Home space.

Aces move automatically to the Home spots.

From that description, it may not seem like that much of a problem.

But you'll have a headache after



The Headache screen includes the Home area (top left), the Pad area (bottom left) and the numbered Card Stacks (right).



you start playing!

To get started, copy HEADACHE.EXE to your Portfolio, and then type HEADACHE.

The game begins with all the cards displayed on the right.

To move a card, you simply press the number that is at the top of the column that it is in.

If the card can go to two different spots, you will hear a beep, and the Port will show you, in the lower-left corner, all of the possible moves for the card.

If there is only one possible place for the card to go, the Port will automatically move the card.

If you wish to move a card from the Pad, press A, B, C, or D, as indicated under the cards.

It is possible to have so many cards in the stacks that the Port cannot show them all on the screen at once.

If this happens, you will see an up arrow at the top of the column. Should you need to know what the cards are

at the top of the column, press the Enter key.

This displays the contents of each stack from the top to the bottom. Press any key to exit this mode.

If the throbbing in your head is becoming too painful, you can press Escape to quit or start a new game.

Should you actually win (it isn't impossible, although it may seem so at first), the Port will let you know.

Some strategy: Try to be aware of where all the Aces are. Try to get to them first, but don't concentrate on them.

Usually, you will want to find the Ace that is the same suit as many of the lower-numbered cards that are also easily accessible.

Use the Pads wisely. Always try to keep one open.

If you can clear out a whole column, you can use that as another Pad-like space, so try to do that if possible.

Always try to put Kings in clear columns, so you can build a string of the same suit in a column. This will ensure that the cards are easily accessible and not blocking any other cards that you may need.

And keep a bottle of aspirin in your Port carrying case!



# Beginner's Column

## Going online with the Port at your side

Although you can use the Port to access the Internet, it's like using a bicycle on the highway — not something you'd want to do every day, if it all.

Of course, the Port can be a handy tool for Internet access, if used properly. And we have some tips that you may not have thought about that can enhance any online experience using the Port.

The problem with using the Port on the Internet is that most access programs require that you use a terminal emulation, usually VT-100 or something similar.

This is so you can see a full screen of information and use your cursor keys to move around that screen and visually pick information off of it.

Because of this, programs for accessing the Internet usually assume at least an 80 by 25 screen, which isn't going to work for the Port.

However, the program Terminal+ from Autobyte does allow VT-100 terminal emulation and a window on an 80 by 25 screen.

If you must use the Port for Internet access, this is the way to go.

The Port still can be useful with just the public domain program Xterm2 for many things.

Usually, you will use Xterm2, along with a modem and a serial interface, to connect to an "Internet Dial-Up," a service that provides access to another machine, most likely running Unix, that is connected directly to the Internet.

With the Port and Xterm2, for instance, you can easily send and



The modem program XTERM2 can be found in the XTERM directory on Re:Port disk #14.

receive electronic mail on the Internet without using fancy terminal emulations.

You can also do maintenance of your local directory of files online with the Port.

In fact, using the Internet with the Port can increase your storage options.

If you have only a 32K card, for instance, and you're writing a book on the Port, just upload what you have to the Internet when the card fills up, then delete it from the card and start writing the next piece.

You can retrieve the text from the Internet later from a desktop PC anywhere in the world.

Perhaps the best tip we can give for using the Port on the Internet or any other information service is to use it as a companion to your desktop PC.

The Address Book application is great for this.

While you're logged on to the Internet on your desktop PC, keep your Port handy with the Address Book running.

This is because the Internet is swarming with all kinds of email addresses, ftp addresses, telnet ports, URLs (uniform resource locators), newsgroup names, and many other

things that are too complex to remember easily.

And the nature of the beast is that you'll see something interesting and wish you remembered where it was so that you could go back later.

What that usually amounts to is that you will forget about it and never get back to it.

With your Port in Address Book mode, you can say goodbye to capture files and random slips of paper that you could lose.

Just start up a file called INTERNET.ADR and put in every interesting address you see.

You may want to give each one a descriptive title on the main line, like "FTP site to Port goodies" and then enter the address of the site on the card section of the screen: archive.umich.edu.

You can also put instructions in there for yourself.

For instance, "FTP, how to use." Give yourself a quick run-down of the commands necessary to get what you want.

This will alleviate the need for keeping reference books around, or stopping what you're doing online to read a help file.

If your desktop terminal program doesn't have a dialing directory, you may also want to keep your access phone numbers in the .ADR file.

Keeping organized is perhaps the best way to get the most out of the Internet, and using the Port is still one of the best ways to get organized, even if it isn't the best way to get online.



# Advanced Programming

## Format of the Address Book is easy to use

This issue's utility focuses on the Address Book, which is probably the most popular function of the Port.

Fortunately for the programmer, it is not difficult to read and write the format required by the Address Book.

Address Book (.ADR) files are basically just plain text with a few simple rules that apply:

1. "Card titles" appear on their own lines at the beginning of an entry.
2. The break between two Address entries is indicated by a line that is only a carriage return and line feed.
3. A blank line within an entry is indicated by a line that is only a space along with a carriage return and line feed.

In other words, your application can simply scan the .ADR file doing a line-by-line read.

If the line you read in consists of only a carriage return and line feed (characters 13 and 10), then you know that you have reached the end of a record, and the next line must be a title.

Actually, because most compilers will return only the text before the carriage return/line feed pair, you will usually just check for a blank or null string to see when the record ends.

However, if you read a line and find just a space in the resulting string, then you know that the current entry is still going and there should be a blank line at this point (usually just for visual clarity).



**ON DISK**

Source code to Re:Port programs can be found on Re:Port disk #14 in the \SOURCE directory

And that's it for the format of the Address Book file.

This month's utility basically finds a string of text within any "card" in the Address Book, and if it matches, that card is stored into a new book.

It does this by taking two passes through the .ADR file.

First, it scans the whole file looking for the null string that results from a break between entries.

If it finds that break, then it knows to increment the card number.

If the text that the user was searching for happened to be on that card, then the card number is stored in an array.

On the next pass, the .ADR file is scanned again.

This time, it also searches for each new entry, but as it does, if the card number matches one in the array, the lines that it reads are just dumped straight out into another file.

With an application like this, there is not really even any need to keep track of the special formatting of the Address Book.

That is totally taken care of by the fact that it is a simple ASCII copy.

However, if you are writing your

own Address Book application (say, a version for the desktop), then you will need to keep in mind the formatting conventions, otherwise, your file won't load on the Port!

The field is wide open out there for someone to come up with conversions from any desktop (especially Windows-based) Personal Information Manager application to the Port's Address Book.

If the PIM is able to do an ASCII export, then the conversion should not be that difficult.

Experiment with your favorite PIM and post your conversion routines to the Internet, CompuServe, or GENie.

We'll even put them on the Re:Port disk if you like.

Writing a desktop version of the Address Book is a bit more complicated, though, although certainly not a major task.

The main thing to remember from a code standpoint is that you must substitute a space and a carriage return/line feed pair whenever the user presses Enter twice during a card entry.

Other than that, it is pretty much open.

The main area of focus, I would think, would be on the main list of card titles.

This is where you could do some nice sorting routines and even offer "picture edits" to ensure proper formatting.

The Address Book is definitely a field to explore if you want to create something many people will use.



# Online Services

## GENie has activity burst; CIS adds files

Oddly enough, this time CompuServe has been a bit more quiet than the GENie, where the Portfolio is concerned.

A big discussion blossomed on GENie about the Portfolio vs. the Apple Newton.

The bottom line, it seems, is that most of the people who have used both seem to like the Port a lot more.

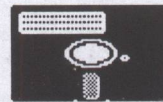
They cite the fact that they can enter information on the Port's small keyboard faster than they can write it on the Newton and then correct the Newton's recognition mistakes.

(Despite many worries in the past, it doesn't look like the Newton is quite the Port killer people thought!)

CompuServe, however, did provide many more new uploads, with some nice files detailing all of the files in its library.

See the on-disk log called CIS.TXT in the \ONLINE directory for more information on what became available recently.

Many CompuServe users, wondering about the quietness of the Atari section of the palmtop forum (GO



**ON DISK**

Catalogs of the new files available on CompuServe and GENie are available on your Re:Port Disk #14 in the \ONLINE directory.

You can get a sign-up kit and \$15 worth of free connect time on CompuServe by calling (800) 848-8199 (ask for Operator 198). Tell them that you heard about this from Re:Port, a Palmtop forum member.

PALMTOP) have asked if there will be another programming marathon or perhaps an online chat marathon, but so far, there has been no organized push behind reviving these two very popular events.

GENie still has online chats every Sunday night at 10 p.m. Eastern Time, with Re:Port editor David Stewart as your host.

For the past few weeks, the chats have been nothing but Stewart logging on with no one to talk to. Please stop by on Sunday if you're a GENie user (M950;2) and say hello!

# Contest

## Wow! Free PC Card Drive to the next winner

First of all, congratulations to David Acklam of Carrollton, Texas. He wins last issue's contest and can take \$5 off his next Re:Port order.

We're feeling bad that it has been so long since there was a contest with a tangible prize, and that it has been so long since the last issue, so we're giving away one of our biggest prizes yet: A PC Card Drive!

If you have a PC, but you don't yet have a PC Card Drive, you should be clipping or copying the form to the right immediately. The card drive is the best way to access Port files from a RAM card, and sending us the feedback form is the only way to win this one.

Send it to Re:Port / PO Box 95691 / Atlanta, GA 30347.

### Re:Port Feedback

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite feature in Re:Port: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite application (pick two):

Editor	Worksheet	Address Book
Diary	Calculator	

If you are unable to use the PC Card Drive because you don't use an IBM PC (or if you don't want the prize for any other reason) just let us know that you'd rather win a \$5 Re:Port gift certificate.



# Mailbox

Dear Re:Port,

SOS! No issue of Re:Port received in 3.5 months!

Update on my experience of rechargeable batteries: By now I have recovered all my initial investment, and can still say that these batteries are almost entirely free from all seven of the kind of bugs I had commonly encountered with ordinary Duracells.

Even the supposed special drawback of rechargeables — liability to fail to give the “Low Battery” warning — has operated only to this extent: while I got the warning eight times out of 10 with Duracells, I got it only seven times out of 10 with rechargeables.

The other drawback is the limited charge span, which makes replacing batteries necessary just about twice as often as with Duracells.

And there is a special bug I have met with rechargeables and not with Duracells: Sometimes the Port is found already on when opened — though normally on (not frozen on), so that it switches itself off in the usual 3-4 minutes.

This shouldn't shorten charge life much unless it's happening frequently when the Port is closed.

This, however, does seem to be the case: At least I think I have found the Port on when opened more often in the 30 percent or so of charge cycles where there was premature expiry.

I have tended to suspect that most bugs have something to do with the seating of the batteries in their compartment.

—Parig Digan,  
Surrey, UK

[Editor's reply: See page 2 about the lateness of the issues. Sorry about that!]

Thanks for the reports on the rechargeable batteries. You seem to be very thorough in your tests, and your findings about the low battery warning are quite interesting.

Do you use any brand of ordinary batteries other than Duracell? I normally use Energizers and find that they perform quite well, although I haven't tracked any exact data.

Also, in the United States there are several products that will allow you to (supposedly safely) recharge normal alkaline batteries.

It would be interesting to see how rechargeable batteries compare to regular batteries put through one of these rejuvenating devices.]

Dear Re:Port,

My boss subscribes to you and now I will be using your informative newsletters and disks.

One note caught my eye about the Atari Lynx

Can you send info on pricing and its games?

It's not for me, it's for my son, yeah, my son, that's it!

Anyway, keep up the good work.

—Bettye Blunt,  
California

[Editor's reply: Yeah, sure, right. There's nothing to be ashamed of; just don't play with the Lynx at work.

Acutally, Re:Port has a great promotion available all the time on all Lynx titles that Atari stocks.

It's called the Stock Up and Save

deal, and it works like this:

If you buy one game, you take \$1 off. If you buy two games, you take \$2 off *each* game. Buy three, take \$3 off each game. And so on, up to and including five games.

So, basically, it works like this:

1 game = \$1 off order

2 games = \$4 off order

3 games = \$9 off order

4 games = \$16 off order

5 games or more = \$25 off order

Once you order five games, it is sort of like getting one game free.

Here's a quick run-down of titles and prices:

**\$49.95:** Batman Returns, Dracula, Pit Fighter.

**\$39.95:** APB, Awesome Golf, Basketbrawl, Bill & Ted's, Blue Lightning, California Games, Checkered Flag, Crystal Mines II, Dinolympics, Dirty Larry, Gordo 106, Hard Drivin', Hockey, Hydra, Joust, Jimmy Connors Tennis, Kung Food, Lemmings, Lynx Casino, NFL Football, Ninja Gaiden, Pinball Jam, Power Factor, RoadBlasters, Scrapydog, Shadow of the Beast, Steel Talons, STUN Runner, SuperSkweek, Switchblade II, Toki, Tournament Cyberball, Turbo Sub, Viking Child, Warbirds, Xybots

**\$34.99:** Baseball Heroes, Rampage, Rampart, Rygar

**\$29.99:** Chip's Challenge, Ishido, Ms. Pac-Man, Pacland, Paperboy, Shanghai, Todd's Adventure's in Slime World, Xenophobe

**\$19.99:** Blockout, Electrocop, Gates of Zendocon, Gauntlet the Third Encounter, Klax, Robo-Squash, Robotron 2084, Zarlol Mercenary.

And tell your son to get his own.]